

**VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
DIRECTIVES MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** The purpose of this Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive is to supplement the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Directive 6330, VA Directives Management System, and establish VHA policy for the complete revision of VHA's Directives Management System (DMS). This VHA Directive establishes new policy and responsibilities for managing and distributing VHA Directives. This VHA Directive replaces VHA's (old DM&S) Supplement to VA Manual MP-1, Part II, Chapter 14, "Policy and Procedures for DM&S Administrative Issues."
2. **SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** The existing VHA policy manuals (M-1 through M-13) must be converted into VHA Directives with conversion completed within a 5-year period. Conversion is to begin by January 1997. Major changes are:
 - a. Establishes new policy and procedures for VHA directive and non-directive issues which together enact the VHA's DMS in accordance with VA Directive 6330.
 - b. Establishes a time limit for the concurrence process which is to be monitored and strictly adhered to for more efficient processing.
 - c. Establishes responsibilities of VHA Headquarters and VHA field facilities concerning VHA's DMS (see par. 3 of VHA Directive).
 - d. Transfers the Facility Fact Sheet requirements from MP-5, Part I, Chapter 332, to this Directive.
3. **RELATED HANDBOOK:** VHA Handbook 6330, "Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directives Management System (DMS) Procedures," contains the required procedures for the preparation and submission of VHA directive and nondirective issues.
4. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Office of Directives, Forms and Records Management, is responsible for this VHA Directive. Questions may be referred to VHA's Headquarter's DMS staff at (202) 273-8970.
5. **RESCISSIONS:** VHA (old DM&S) Supplement to Manual MP-1, Part II, Chapter 14, dated July 10, 1984; MP-5, Part I, Chapter 332, Appendix G, Change 2, dated February 2, 1982; Chief Medical Director Memorandums 10-83-18, 10-90-002, and 10-92-013 are rescinded. This VHA Directive will be reviewed for recertification before May 2001.

s/ T. Garthwaite, M.D. for

Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H.
Under Secretary for Health

Distribution: **RPC: 1001 is reassigned**
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**VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
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1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration's (VHA's) Directive supplements the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Directive 6330, and hereby establishes new policy for VHA Directives Management System (DMS).

2. POLICY: VHA Headquarters and VHA field facilities will establish and maintain a DMS in accordance with VA Directive 6330 and this VHA Directive and corresponding Handbook. (**Authority:** Title 41 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 201; Federal Information Resources Management Regulation (FIRMR).) VHA DMS will use two types of media - "directive" and "nondirective." The two types of media are defined as follows:

a. **Directive Media.** Directive documents contain mandatory policies or procedures. There are four VHA directive documents:

(1) **VHA Directives.** VHA directives establish mandatory VHA policies which will not carry an expiration date, but will be recertified in 5 years. If the policies prescribe short-term requests for reports, data collection or implement special short-term programs, they will be temporary directives with a 1-year (or less) expiration date specified. ***NOTE:*** *A directive will not be retained in the current file after the expiration date.*

(2) **VHA Handbooks.** VHA handbooks prescribe mandatory VHA procedures or operational requirements implementing policies contained in directives. This term will not be used for any other publication. Each handbook must relate to policy established in a VHA Directive.

(3) **VHA Numbered Memorandums.** VHA numbered memorandums establish mandatory VHA policies which apply within VHA Headquarters only. A numbered memorandum will carry a rescission date of 5 years, unless a shorter period of time is appropriate.

(4) **VHA Notices.** VHA notices announce or provide significant information involving, or of interest VHA-wide. Examples include special events, appointments of senior management personnel, and major organizational changes. A notice will carry a rescission date of no more than 6 months.

NOTE: *No mandatory policies or procedures prepared in VHA Headquarters or at a field facility are to be distributed VHA nationwide without proper VHA Headquarters approvals and processing (44 United States Code (U.S.C.) 3501).*

b. **Nondirective Media.** Non-directive documents contain non-directive information.

(1) Key Staff Memorandum. Key Staff Memorandums are unnumbered memorandums which inform VHA Headquarters officials of non-directive matters or of matters which are special and non-permanent in nature. Approving officials include the Under Secretary for Health (10), Deputy Under Secretary for Health (10A), Chief of Staff (10C), Chief Network Officer (10N), Chief Patient Care Services Officer (11), Chief Research and Development Officer (12), Chief Public Health and Environmental Hazards Officer (13), Chief Academic Affiliations Officer (14), Director, Readjustment Counseling Service (15), Chief Administrative Officer (16), Chief Financial Officer (17), Chief Facilities Management Officer (18), Chief Information Officer (19), Chief Employee Education Officer (102), Chief Veterans Canteen Officer (103), Director, Emergency Medical Preparedness Office (104), and Chief Policy, Planning and Performance Officer (105).

(2) VHA Numbered Information Letter or Newsletters

(a) *VHA Information Letter (IL)*. A numbered IL is used to release nondirective information of one-time interest or short duration; i.e., applications for training opportunities, describing new programs, or final reports:

1. A numbered IL is issued over the signature of the Under Secretary for Health **only** when containing information which is of interest VHA-wide and special emphasis is placed on the subject by obtaining the approval and signature of the Under Secretary for Health.

2. Numbered ILs are issued over the signature of the office official level, or equal; i.e., Office of Patient Care Service (11), when information is of interest only to field activities under their jurisdiction.

3. An IL will carry a rescission date for a period of no more than 6 months.

4. ILs **will not** be used to issue guidelines or procedures (see VHA Handbook 6330, Figure 9).

(b) *VHA Newsletter (NL)*. A numbered NL is used to release non-directive information of one-time interest or short duration that is of interest to all VHA.

1. NLs will be issued only by the Under Secretary for Health, Deputy Under Secretary, and office officials providing information nationwide concerning elements under their jurisdiction.

2. A NL will carry a rescission date for a period of no more than 6 months.

3. This medium **will not** be used to issue guidelines or procedures.

4. VHA NLs will be issued with the approval of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health and under the signature of the appropriate Chief Official. Newsletters at the facilities will be issued with the approval of the Director or designee (see VHA Handbook 6330, Figure 9 and 9a).

(3) VHA Program Guide (PG). PGs contain non-mandatory and non-directive procedures for development of a program defined in VHA Directives. Program guides will be issued with the approval of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health and for the signature of the appropriate originating Chief Officer (see VHA Handbook 6330, par. 4.i.(1)).

(4) VHA Training Program (TP) Guide. TP Guides contain non-directive guidelines and instructions for conducting a specific course of training. Some exceptions may include directive material. TP Guides will be issued with approval of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health and for the signature of appropriate office official (see VHA Handbook 6330, par. 4.i.(2)).

(5) VHA Other Types of Non-directive Media

(a) *VHA Information Bulletin (IB)*. IBs contain non-directive material to describe accounts of VHA experiences, suggestions, and related material not appropriate for other types of media. IBs are intended for the assistance and information to veterans and personnel. IBs may be reissued or revised and maintained for continual distribution. IB subject matter must pertain exclusively to official business, and will not include news of employee social activities, personal items, or material which is appropriate for publication in PGs. IBs will be issued with approval of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health.

(b) *VHA Pamphlet*. VHA pamphlets contain non-directive material intended for the assistance and information of veterans or general public. VHA pamphlet subject matter must pertain exclusively to official business, and will not include news of employee social activities, personal items, or material which is appropriate for publication in other media. VHA pamphlets will be issued with approval of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health.

(c) *VHA Monograph*. A VHA monograph is a book, paper or article written about a single subject.

(d) *VHA Bibliography*. A VHA bibliography is a list of authors' books and other writings.

(e) *VHA Poster*. A VHA poster is a large printed illustration of a specific subject assigned a VHA number.

(f) *VHA Maps*. VHA maps are a printed illustration of the United States identifying VHA Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) boundaries and locations of VHA facilities. VHA Maps are prepared, numbered, and dated by DMO.

(g) *VHA Organizational Chart*. For historical record keeping, an official VHA organizational chart is numbered and dated depicting up-to-date VHA organizational structure processed and printed through DMO.

(h) *Facility Fact Sheet*. VHA facilities will develop, print and distribute Facility Fact Sheets as needed to support recruitment efforts. Each facility will provide its own funds, and is responsible for determining the most feasible method for procuring printing. Requirements for Facility Fact Sheet are described in VHA Handbook 6330, paragraph 4. j.(8).

(i) *Key Staff Memorandums*. For instruction for the preparation of a Key Staff Memorandum, consult with the Office of Executive Correspondence (101B).

c. **VHA Numbering System.** The numbering of VHA official issues; i.e., directives, handbooks, etc., will be based on function (subject). Other numbering systems for all the types of media will be defined in VHA Handbook 6330. All numbering systems are assigned by the Directives Management Officer (DMO) or Publications Control Officer (PCO).

d. **Formats and Procedures.** VHA staff will follow established formats and procedures as prescribed in VHA Handbook 6330 for each type of VHA issue for VHA Headquarters and field facilities. (Further instructions in VHA Handbook 6330.)

e. **Concurrences.** The review of a proposed VHA directive, handbook, notice, and other numbered media requiring concurrence outside the originating office will be completed within 30 calendar days beginning on the date the originator began processing. (See VHA Handbook 6330, Par. 5, for concurrence procedures.)

f. **Approval Authority.** Established approval authority will be followed as prescribed in paragraph 3.

g. **Automation.** It is VHA policy to use the state-of-the-art in automation. All VHA directives will be prepared in Microsoft word or compatible system in the preparation for the dissemination of directives by VHA's DMO. (See VHA Handbook 6330, Par. 4.)

3. ACTION

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health has the delegated authority to issue policy for the operation of VHA. (**Authority:** MP-1, Pt. I, Ch. 6, and VA Directive 6330). In compliance with VA Directive 6330, the Under Secretary for Health will:

- (1) Designate a VHA DMO (161A4) in VHA Headquarters.
- (2) Ensure that an effective VHA DMS is established.
- (3) Approve a VHA DMS document when:
 - (a) There is a change in VHA's basic mission, objectives, or policies.
 - (b) The document itself is used as a mechanism for delegating the Under Secretary for Health's authority.
 - (c) The policy or procedure governs the benefits, rights, or responsibilities of veterans, their beneficiaries, or members of the public.

b. **Deputy Under Secretary for Health.** The Deputy Under Secretary for Health will concur or non-concur on all VHA directives, handbooks, numbered memorandums, notices, and other DMS issues which are under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health. In the absence of the Under Secretary for Health, the Deputy Under Secretary for Health is delegated the authority to approve or disapprove VHA directives, handbooks, numbered memorandums, and notices.

c. **VISN Directors.** VISN Directors will ensure that each medical facility under their jurisdiction is in compliance with VHA Directive and Handbook 6330.

d. **VHA Headquarters Chief Officers and Equivalent Directors.** The Chief Officers and equivalent Directors have delegated authority to sign non-directive ILs and PGs which are published only for the audience under their jurisdiction. The Chief Officers and equivalent Directors will:

(1) Designate a liaison to VHA's DMO to coordinate publication issues under the jurisdiction of the Chief Official, or equivalent Director, in compliance with VA and VHA Directive and Handbook 6330.

(2) Provide the name and any change to the liaison, to the VHA Headquarters DMO (161A4).

(3) Concur or non-concur on directives, handbooks, numbered memorandums, and notices when the particular issue addresses the program area under the official's jurisdiction within the designated time-frame.

(4) Ensure that all directives management issues (i.e., directives, handbooks, and notices, etc.) developed in their areas of jurisdiction meet the requirements of VHA's DMS, as set forth in this VHA Directive and Handbook 6330.

(5) Review, in accordance with an established schedule provided by VHA DMO (161A4), all active directives, handbooks and numbered memoranda for which their organization is responsible, and:

(a) Coordinate with VHA DMO (161A4) to rescind those that are obsolete,

(b) Maintain lists of those that are current, and

(c) Comply with the recertification process (see VHA Handbook 6330, par. 11).

(6) Incorporate automation into every aspect of VHA's DMS.

e. **VHA DMO (161A4)** is responsible for:

(1) **VHA Directives Management.** The VHA DMO (161A4) will:

(a) Coordinate and maintain VHA's DMS in compliance with VA Directive 6330, VHA Directive and Handbooks 6330.

(b) Establish and maintain the Under Secretary for Health's Library containing VHA publications in compliance 41 CFR, Subtitle E, Chapter 201, FIRMR.

(c) Establish VHA policy and procedures for facility DMS Program.

(2) VHA Information Management. The VHA DMO (161A4) will ensure that information management in VHA is established and maintained in accordance with all VA and Federal Regulations.

(3) VHA Forms Management. The VHA DMO (161A4) is responsible for VHA's Forms Management in accordance with all VA and Federal Regulations. **NOTE:** *Policy for Forms Management will be established in VA and VHA Directive 6310.*

f. VHA Field Facilities

(1) VHA facility Directors will:

(a) In accordance with VHA Directive 6330, designate a PCO who is responsible for the VHA DMS within their facility.

(b) Provide the name and any change to the PCO, to the VHA Headquarters DMO (161A4).

(c) Ensure that the DMS Program at their facility is conducted in accordance with the policies and requirements set forth in VA Directive 6330, VHA Directive and Handbook 6330.

(d) Issue any supplemental facility instructions necessary to carry out the provisions of VHA DMS.

(2) Facility PCO is responsible for:

(a) *Facility Directives Management*. The facility PCO will:

1. Coordinate and maintain VHA's DMS in compliance with VA Directive 6330, VHA Directive and Handbook 6330.

2. Establish and maintain the medical center Director's Library containing VA and VHA publications.

3. Establish facility policy and procedures for the facility DMS Program.

(b) *VHA Information Management*. The medical center PCO will ensure that the facility Information Management is established and maintained in accordance with all VHA DMS policies.

(c) *Forms Management*. The facility PCO is responsible for VHA's Forms Management in the facility with accordance to all VA and Federal Regulations. **NOTE:** *Policy for Forms Management will be established in VA and VHA Directive 6310.*

g. Originators. Originators of VHA documents will:

(1) Follow policies and procedures established in this VHA Directive and Handbook 6330.

(2) Plan issues to allow for proper concurrence, final approval, and printing time.

(3) Be aware of the concurrences required. Together with the DMO, determine initial concurrences required.

(4) Be responsible for issuing any necessary changes required to their original issue in a timely manner so there is no occurrence of expiration of time.

h. **Concurring Officials.** Concurring officials will:

(1) Comply with the 30 days allowed for completion of the concurrence process. (Further instructions to be published in VHA Handbook 6330.)

(2) When they concur, carry the responsibility that the issue meets with their approval with regard to accuracy of statements, authority of sources, consistency of procedures, clarity of presentation, and dependability of provisions in all areas which concern them, including distribution.

i. **Joint Responsibility.** In some instances, issues under the jurisdiction of more than one organizational element, may need a change where only one of the elements is involved. In such instances, the originator of the change will:

(1) Alert the other organizational elements affected that a change is being made.

(2) Initiate change and obtain concurrence from the other organizational element.

NOTE: No publication (professional or administrative) issuing policy or mandatory procedure will be issued by a facility for distribution outside the issuing facility without prior approval of the Under Secretary for Health. All VHA DMS issues distributed nationwide must be coordinated through VHA Headquarters, VHA DMO (161A4).

4. REFERENCES

a. VA Directive 0010 (replaced MP-1, Pt. I, Ch. 1, "Written Communications - Approval Authorities").

b. MP-1, Part II, Chapter 9, "Printing and Reproduction."

c. MP-1, Part II, Chapter 10, "Correspondence."

d. MP-5, Part I, Chapter 790, "Services to Employees (General)."

e. MP-6, Part XIV, Supplement 7.1, "Field Facilities' Procedures for Requisitioning Forms, Form Letters, and Publications."

f. M-03-1, "Graphics Standards Manual."

g. I-03-1, "VA Publications Index."

- h. VA Catalog 1-P, Publications Catalog LOG 1.
- i. VA Catalog 2, VA Catalog of Recurring Publication Code Numbers.
- j. Users Guide for Automated Distribution System.
- k. Title 41 CFR 201, FIRMR.
- l. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-3, Government Publications, and A-130, Management of Federal Information Resources.
- m. Title 44 U.S.C. 3501, Coordination of Federal Information Policy.